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Army agency's deal to be a record

Teams led by Raytheon and General Dynamics vie for the contract, potentially worth \$11B.

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The Army's Orlando-based simulation-training agency is less than six weeks away from awarding the biggest contract in its history, industry officials said Thursday.

Rival teams led by two large defense contractors, Raytheon Co. and General Dynamics Corp., are competing for a deal potentially worth more than \$11 billion over the next decade.

The program's aim: to provide technical and operational support for Army training simulators worldwide. Hundreds of jobs are tied to the deal, though much of the work will be done at Army bases and training centers around the globe.

"This is a big deal for the industry," said Ken Kelly, chairman of the National Center for Simulation, a trade group based in Orlando's Central Florida Research Park, the nexus of the region's simulation-training industry. "Everyone has been watching this one. Now the teams are in the final throes and it's just a matter of waiting for the outcome."

The megadeal, scheduled to be announced June 4, is known as Warfighter FOCUS, short for "Warfighter Field Operations Customer Support." It would consolidate three existing contracts that are expiring later this year, the Army says. Combining the contracts is expected to generate major cost savings and efficiencies for the military.

The winning contractor team will provide a variety of services, from electronic and mechanical work to basic maintenance, for computer-based virtual exercises and live-action war games, Army officials said.

"The Warfighter FOCUS contract would cover the majority of training simulators that the Army uses," said Heather Kelly, spokeswoman for the Orlando contract agency, known as the Army Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training & Instrumentation.



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Most of the contract's program management and administrative work will be done in Central Florida, regardless of which teams wins, Kelly said. But it was unclear Thursday how many jobs would be created locally; neither General Dynamics nor Raytheon would discuss their plans or comment on the agency's pending decision.

Both teams boast a lineup of heavy-hitters in the defense business, including Lockheed Martin Corp. and Northrop Grumman Corp. with General Dynamics, and Boeing Co. and Rockwell Collins Corp. with Raytheon.

Both team leaders have also assembled dozens of small-business subcontractors, many of which are located in Central Florida, home to the nation's largest concentration of training-simulator companies. The region has more than 150 such companies that employ more than 17,000 people, according to economic-development studies.

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